



MISSION

To improve children's health and wellness through physical activity and healthy eating

VISION

A community where every child has the opportunity to live a healthy life

VALUES

Equity, Collaboration, Excellence, Possibility, Persistence

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

DEAR FRIENDS,

In the past year, we've made great strides—strengthened our programs, expanded our reach, and, most importantly, inspired healthy habits in children throughout our region. Now, we're setting the stage for an exciting next chapter: *Growing Healthy Kids*, our bold strategic plan and fundraising campaign.

This three-and-a-half-year roadmap was created through thoughtful collaboration with our staff, partners, and supporters. It outlines a vision focused on lifelong health and well-being with key goals to:

- Expand our reach to serve early childhood and high school, ensuring Fit4Kids supports all stages of child development—from birth through college.
- Scale our Learning Garden program to reach every Title I elementary and middle school—a 400% increase in the number of schools we serve!
- Improve school communities by ensuring safer routes to school, including crossing guards at all busy intersections near Richmond Public Schools.

- Amplify student and parent voices to address health and wellness needs.
- Increase access to free, healthy meals and water in schools.



To bring this vision to life, we've launched a \$1.2 million fundraising campaign to support this important work.

We look forward to continuing this journey with all of you—our partners, supporters, and champions for healthy kids. Together, we are creating a brighter, healthier future.

In this report, you'll learn what we achieved together over the last year and what lies ahead as we create more opportunities for children.

WITH GRATITUDE,

Mary Dunne Stewart

Mary Dunne Stewart, *Fit4Kids* CEO

BY THE NUMBERS

35 Richmond Public Schools with a crossing guard encouraging safe, active transportation

24,051 MINUTES
of active lessons taught encouraging kids to move while learning

STUDENTS WERE 10x

More likely to have water bottles at lunch after hydration intervention efforts

15,828

Samples passed out to students during Fruit and Veggie Week—an initiative encouraging the tasting of nutritious foods in a fun, pressure-free way

10,192

Seedlings distributed to schools and community partners and gardens

HOW WE'RE GROWING!



LEARN TO RIDE

In early 2024, Fit4Kids piloted Learn to Ride, a bike education program, at two RPS elementary schools in partnership with PE reaching 467 kids teaching essential biking skills! Students learned bike safety, like helmet use and traffic rules, while developing resilience as they navigated challenges with guidance and encouragement.

WHAT'S NEXT: During the 2024–25 school year, we'll expand Learn to Ride to 12 new schools transporting a fleet of bikes to different schools every 4 weeks to reach new kids. By promoting active transportation and fostering perseverance, the program empowers students to build confidence, adopt healthier lifestyles, and gain valuable life skills both on and off the bike.

HEALTHY HYDRATION

Hydrate RPS: Fit4Kids partners with VCU and our community partners to study how increased water access and education about healthy hydration affect student health and academic performance in Richmond Public Schools. In 2023–2024, we piloted the program at one school, promoting healthy hydration through water bottle distribution, an educational event, student and teacher ambassadors, academic-based lessons, and incentives.



WHAT'S NEXT: This fall, we're expanding to 12 elementary schools, delivering the intervention to four schools at a time over the next three years. We'll also continue to engage our community advisory board, including teachers, students, staff, and partners. Sip, sip, hooray!



LEARNING GARDENS

Our school Learning Gardens invite kids to get their hands dirty while planting, growing, harvesting, and tasting fresh, flavorful food—right in their own schoolyards! Gardens provide hands-on learning experiences while also encouraging healthy eating habits. During the 2023-24 school year, Fit4Kids engaged 5,323 students at 25 schools across the region in exciting garden-based learning.

WHAT'S NEXT: With over a decade of garden experience, we're ready to dig deeper and grow even more! Over the summer, we added new gardens, bringing our total to 42 as of September 2024. But we're not stopping there—by 2027, we aim to have Learning Garden programming in every Title I school in our service area, growing our reach by nearly 400%!

GROWING HEALTHY KIDS: THE IMPACT OF GAME ON, GIRL!

KEZIAH HERMAN joined Game On, Girl!, our program empowering adolescent girls through physical activity, nutrition, and teamwork, as a 6th grader at Lucille Brown Middle. The after school sessions provided a space where she could be herself and learn new ways to be active. *“When I first joined Game On, Girl!, I was shy and unsure of myself,”* Keziah recalls. *“But the program gave me the confidence to push my limits, both physically and mentally. It gave me a different outlook and I learned that being strong isn’t just about fitness—it’s about believing in yourself.”*

Now a sophomore at Virginia Union University, Keziah has come full circle with Fit4Kids, re-engaging as a coach for 50 girls at the June 2024 Summer Summit—a four-day active camp. *“When I saw the post about Summit, I knew I wanted to be involved,”* she said. *“I was shown so much love as a participant and I wanted to share this with other kids. Watching these girls discover their own strength and confidence reminds me why this work is so important. We’re showing them to believe in themselves and support each other.”*



Fit4Kids partners with NextUp, an out-of-school time provider for middle school youth, to offer its Game On, Girl! and Learning Garden program to RPS students.

AMIR ELSAYED, NextUp’s Director of Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives, has worked with Fit4Kids for years and seen firsthand how the nonprofit’s work transforms the school environment and positively impacts students.

“Game On, Girl! does more than get students active—it gives them a sense of belonging and purpose,” Amir shares. *“The girls involved are more confident, they perform better academically, and they develop a strong sense of teamwork that carries over into the classroom.”*

ERIN WILSON also has a long history with Fit4Kids starting as an intern in 2020. She later rejoined as an intern and volunteer during her MPH graduate experience at Virginia Commonwealth University. Erin has served as one of the head coaches for the annual Summer Summit camp for two consecutive years (2023-2024). Now, she’s a proud member of the Fit4Kids’ team helping to build capacity to reach Fit4Kids ambitious new goals.

For Erin, *“growing healthy kids”* is about more than physical fitness—it’s about providing a foundation for lifelong wellness. She shared, *“my lifelong goals are to spread kindness and instill confidence within our youth community because I believe that healthy kids start with healthy connections and relationships!”*



TOGETHER, KEZIAH, AMIR, AND ERIN SHOW THAT “GROWING HEALTHY KIDS” AND FIT4KIDS IS ABOUT BUILDING CONFIDENCE, FOSTERING CONNECTIONS, AND EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION TO BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES AND THRIVE.

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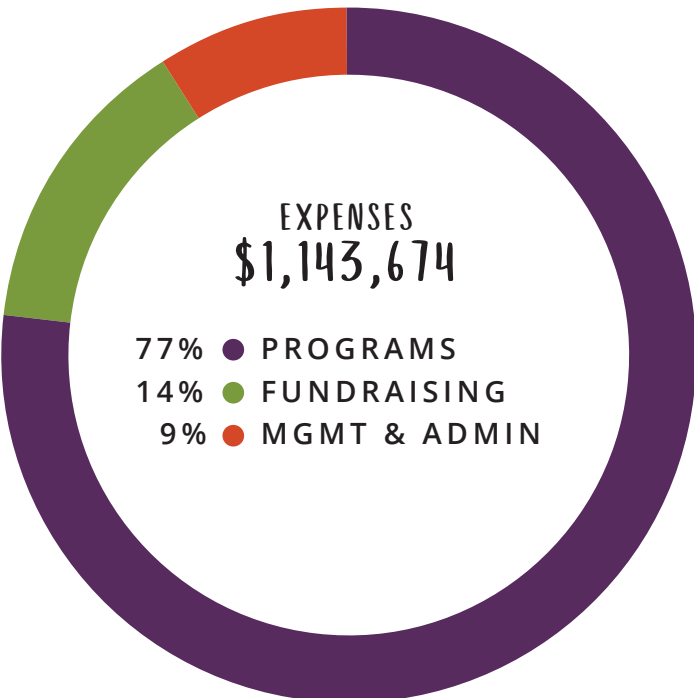
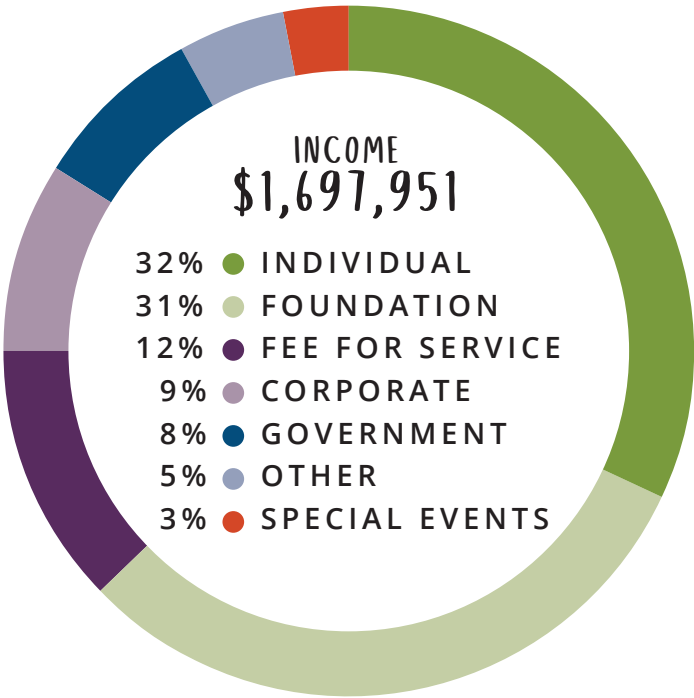
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